

BIEN - BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK

BIEN was founded in 1986 and aims to serve as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income, and to foster informed discussion on this topic throughout Europe.

BIENOnline: <http://www.basicincome.org>

E-mail: <<mailto:bien@basicincome.org>>

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BIEN's NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to about 1100 subscribers throughout Europe and beyond. It is also made available for consultation or download at BIENOnline <<http://www.basicincome.org/>> shortly after being dispatched.

Requests for free subscription and items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes are to be sent to BIEN's secretary: Philippe Van Parijs, UCL, Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, <<mailto:bien@basicincome.org>> .

This NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of Gianluca Busilacchi, Alexander de Roo, Bridget Dommen, Malena Fabregat, Sascha Liebermann, Jose Noguera, Paul Nollen, Eduardo Suplicy

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6. About BIEN

1. EDITORIAL

As planned, we met at the end of October in Barcelona with the local organizing committee of our 10th Congress and with the Catalanian Institute of Human Rights, in charge of coordinating a set of six events, our Congress among them, within the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures. We visited the impressive building site of the Forum along the sea and were informed in greater detail about the nature and content of other events. Irrespective of our congress itself, coming to Barcelona on 18-21 September 2004 is bound to be a memorable experience.

Most of our time, however, was devoted to further preparation of the plenary sessions and parallel workshops of our Congress. You will find below a provisional programme, including a provisional list of the panels that have been selected to occupy some of the workshop slots. A call is now made for relevant papers, whether or not they fit into one of the panels. The deadline is 31 March 2004, and details are provided below.

Our warmest thanks to the local team and to the Institute of Human Rights for their splendid job so far.

The Executive Committee

2. TENTH CONGRESS OF THE BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK "The Right to a Basic Income: Egalitarian Democracy"

Barcelona (Spain), 19-20 September 2004

2.1. PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

The Congress is being held within the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures, as part of the Dialogue on "*Human Rights, Emerging Needs and New Opportunities*" organised by Catalonia's Institute of Human Rights (18-21 September 2004). The (very reasonable) participation fee will cover access to all activities organised during these four days as part of this "Dialogue". (Practical details will follow in due course.)

Friday, September 17th:

4th symposium of the Red Renta Básica (Spanish section of BIEN).

Saturday, September 18th:

Plenary sessions common to the 5 events organised by the Institute of Human Rights.

Sunday, September 19th:

9:00-11:00: Plenary session common to the 5 events organised by the Institute of Human Right.

BIEN Congress 1st day

11:30-12:00 Institutional presentation

12:00-14:00: Opening plenary session: "The Basic Challenges in the Justification of Basic Income"

12:00-13:00: Exchange 1: "Right to Basic Income and Duty of Reciprocity"

13:00-14:00: Exchange 2: "Basic Income and Care-Work"

15:30-17:00: Panels and parallel workshops

17:30-19:00: Panels and parallel workshops

Monday, September 20th:

BIEN Congress 2nd day

9:30-11:00: Panels and parallel workshops

11:30-13:00: Panels and parallel workshops

14:30-17:30: Closing plenary session: "Basic Income in Response to Systemic Crisis"

14:30-16:00: Exchange 1: "Facing the New Crisis of Social Security and the Welfare State"

16:00-17:30: Exchange 2: "The Prospects of Basic Income in Developing Countries"

17:30-17:45: Closing speeches

18:00-20:00 BIEN General Assembly

Tuesday, September 21th:

Closing common events of the general Dialogue:

* Closing conference by President Lula da Silva (tbc)

* Public presentation of Dialogue's conclusions

* Public Presentation of the Universal Declaration of Emerging Human Rights

* Closing speeches by Michael Moore and Susan Sarandon

Languages of the Congress

English, French, Spanish and Catalan, with simultaneous translation in all plenary sessions and in some panel sessions. English only in the other panel sessions. (Further details later.)

Parallel Workshops and Panels

Sixteen parallel workshops will be organised mainly as panels of 3-4 speakers, coordinated by a chair and devoted to the discussion of one single subject. The call for panel coordinators had its deadline last October and ended successfully with a high number of proposals. However, some parallel sessions may still be filled with individual papers. Individual paper proposals may be also used by the Scientific Committee to fill some possible gaps in the panel sessions. When strictly necessary, panel sessions may have simultaneous translation.

2.2. PROVISIONAL LIST OF PANELS

Twelve panel proposals have been accepted provisionally, subject to the final confirmation of speakers by the coordinators and to the approval of their contents by the Scientific Committee soon after the 31 March 2004 deadline.

The panels at this moment are the following (anyone interested in these specific issues may contact the coordinators):

- 1) *Basic Income and the Right to Work* (coord. Philip Harvey, pharvey@camden.rutgers.edu).
- 2) *Towards an European Basic Income Experiment* (coord. Loek Groot, lgroot@mail.siswo.uva.nl).
- 3) *Implementing Basic Income: Administrative Challenges* (Jürgen de Wispelaere, jurgen.dewispelaere@ucd.ie).
- 4) *Basic Income and Democratic Republicanism* (coords. Daniel Raventós & David Casassas, ravento@eco.ub.es, casassas@eco.ub.es).
- 5) *Basic Income as a Trade Union Policy* (coords. Alex Boso & Sergi Raventós, alexboso@hotmail.com, sravenpa7@socio.ub.edu).
- 6) *Basic Income as a Policy for Fighting Against Child Labour* (coord. Eduardo Calderón, eduardo.calderon@uab.es).
- 7) *Benefits in Kind vs. Benefits in Monetary Form: Strengths and Weaknesses in Different Worlds* (coord. Manfred Bienefeld, ManfredBienefeld@pigeon.carleton.ca).
- 8) *Innovative and Sustainable Financing for Basic Income* (coord. Paul Metz, Metz@integerconsult.org).
- 9) *Basic Income and Spiritual Values: Strong Ethical Arguments in the Basic Income Debate* (coord. Michael Opielka, michael.opielka@isoe.org).
- 10) *From Aspiration to Policy Implementation: Introducing a Basic Income System Category by Category* (coord. Sean J. Healy, sean.healy@cori.ie).
- 11) *Towards a Universal Basic Pension* (coord. Guy Standing, GuyStanding@compuserve.com).
- 12) *After Workfare* (coord. Yannick Vanderborght, vanderborght@etes.ucl.ac.be).

All panel coordinators should send the complete list of speakers and abstracts to the Scientific Committee (jose.noguera@uab.es) before **31 March 2004**, and, if approved, send the complete papers before **31 July 2004**.

2.3. CALL FOR PAPERS

If you would like to present a paper that could fit into one of the above panels, do get in touch directly with the coordinator. If your paper proposal is not related to any of the themes of the panels or if for some other reason it cannot be fitted into a panel, you can submit it directly to Jose Antonio Noguera <jose.noguera@uab.es>, following the guidelines below. A minimum of 16 slots will be allocated to papers proposed in this way. The earlier you get in touch, the better.

ABSTRACTS

- * In English.
- * Of no more than 100 words plus title.
- * Should include: complete name of the author, profession and/or institution, postal address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address.
- * Should reach the coordinator of the Scientific Committee (José A. Noguera, jose.noguera@uab.es) before **31 March 2004**.
- * Authors will be informed before 31 May 2004 about whether their paper is accepted or not.

PAPERS

- * Should contribute new insights relevant to the basic income discussion, whether through empirical research, theoretical analysis, or a discussion of conceptual or practical issues.
- * Format: Times New Roman 12, 1,5 spaces.
- * Will be presented orally (maximum 15 minutes) in the workshops, by one of the authors registered as a Congress participant.
- * Are to be submitted to the coordinator of the Scientific Committee (José A. Noguera, jose.noguera@uab.es) before **31 July 2004**. Papers which arrive in time will be included in a CD to be distributed to all the Congress participants.

2. 4. LOCAL ORGANIZING AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

José A. Noguera (Program coordinator. Professor of Sociology at the Universidad Autònoma of Barcelona, and Vice-president of Red Renta Básica), jose.noguera@uab.es

David Casassas (Organization coordinator. Researcher at the University of Barcelona and Secretary of Red Renta Básica), casassas@eco.ub.es.

Daniel Raventós (President of Red Renta Básica. Professor of Social Theory at the University of Barcelona)

Sandra González (Researcher at Oxford University and the University of Barcelona. Member of the Executive Committee of Red Renta Básica)

Francisco Ramos (Lecturer in Sociology at the Universidad Oberta de Catalunya. Treasurer of Red Renta Básica)

3. OTHER EVENTS

MADRID (ES), 3 December 2003: DEBATE ON BASIC INCOME AT THE UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA

Within the framework of the "solidarity week" of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Facultad de Ciencias Económica, Campus Cantoblanco), there will be a debate on "Un derecho de existencia material ciudadana: La Renta Básica" ("the right to a citizen's material existence: basic income"), with the participation of José Barea (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), Cristina García (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), Jose Antonio Pérez (Attac-Madrid) and Daniel Raventós (Universidad de Barcelona).

Organizer: Oficina de Acción Solidaria y Cooperación del Vicerrectorado de Extensión Universitaria y Cooperación.

Further information: "Daniel Raventos" <ravento@eco.ub.es>

BARCELONA (ES), 10 December 2003: 3rd SYMPOSIUM OF THE RED RENTA BASICA

The third conference of Spain's national network on a basic income, to be held this year at Barcelona's Pompeu Fabra University.

With the participation of academics such as Jordi Guiu (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Jordi Mundó (Universitat de Barcelona), Sebastià Sarasa (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Jaime Pastor (UNED), Trade Union leaders such as Izaskun de la Fuente (Ezker Sindikalaren Konbergentzia), politicians such as Carme Porta (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya), Ricard Gomà (Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds), Antoni Comín (Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya), Neus Munté (Convergència i Unió), Nekane Azelai (Eusko Alkastasuna) and members of the Board of the Red Renta Basica.

Further information on www.redrentabasica.org and from secretaria@redrentabasica.org

WASHINGTON (US), 20-22 February 2004: 3rd CONGRESS OF USBIG

The third congress of the US Basic Income Guarantee Network will again be held in conjunction with the Eastern Economics Association, this time in Washington, DC at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. For further information, <http://www.usbig.net/> and <<mailto:Karl@Widerquist.com>>.

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

BRAZIL: GRADUAL CITIZEN'S INCOME THROUGH FEDERAL CONGRESS

On 20 October 20 2003, president Lula launched the "Bolsa Família Program" and the respective Provisionary Measure nº 132 which unifies four existing programs of income transfers : the Minimum Income Program related to Education, or Bolsa Escola, the Minimum Income Program Related to Nutrition or Bolsa Alimentação, the National Program Acces to

Food or Cartão Alimentação, related to the Zero Hunger Program; and the Auxílio Gás Program (Gas Help Program). The obligation that the benefit must be spent on food has been dropped. The Government predicts that there will be 3.6 million families enrolled in this program by the end of 2003, and 11.4 million families by the end of 2006.

Consistent with this important development but with a longer-term perspective, Senator Suplicy's citizen's income initiative has been making further progress. After the Brazilian Senate (in December 2002) and the Fiscal and Finance Committee of Brazil's federal Chamber of Deputies (October 2003), the Justice and Constitutional Committee has in its turn approved on 26 November 2003 the proposal to institute a Citizen's Basic Income for all Brazilians and even for foreigners having lived in Brazil for at least five years, from 2005 on, to be introduced gradually, starting with those most in need. The level of the Citizen's Income will be defined by the Executive, taking into account the level of the country's development and the availability of resources. Unless a large number of deputies request a plenary vote or President Lula refuses to sanction the bill, this vote means that the bill is being approved by the National Congress. For further information: "Sen. Eduardo Suplicy" <EDUARDO.SUPLICY@SENADOR.GOV.BR>

FRANCE: BOUTIN'S UNIVERSAL DIVIDEND ONLINE

The text of Christine Boutin's report to the French Prime Minister, which includes a "universal dividend" proposal can now be accessed on <http://isolement.frs-online.org/article.php3?id_article=47#Heading1931>

GERMANY: POSTERS IN THE FRANKFURT SUBWAY

After several months of preparation, the Frankfurt Group of basic income supporters is now ready to go public with a poster to advertise an unconditional basic income that is meant to be put up in Frankfurt subway stations in December 2003. They will also inform politicians, journalists, interest groups, and relevant newspapers about their ideas concerning a UBI. Their "theses", as advertised on the poster, are available on their website

For further information: Stefan Heckel, Axel Jansen, Sascha Liebermann, www.freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de ; <S.Liebermann@freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de>

LATIN AMERICA: NETWORK IN THE MAKING

Malena Fabregat is collecting information about moves towards a citizen's income in Latin American countries in order to synthesise it for the newsletter of the Spanish Red Renta Basica (www.redrentabasica.org). Do keep her informed at rentabasica.americalatina@nodo50.org. An Argentinian network is in the making, under the leadership of Ruben Lo Vuolo, Alberto Barbeito, Elsa Gil, Julieta Elgarte and others. Its web site is www.ingresociudadano.org.

NETHERLANDS: BASIC INCOME WORST AND BEST IN NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

On 16 September 2003, Holland's left-of-centre daily paper *De Volkskrant* published a double-page discussion of four possible futures for the Dutch welfare state: a marginal modification of the status quo, a more strongly insurance-oriented public system, a public system reduced to residual assistance and a basic income. They asked five "experts" to evaluate the four scenarios according to ten criteria (such as growth, feasibility, solidarity or freedom of choice) and to weight these criteria. The public insurance schenario came out on top and had been ranked first by two of the experts (Philip de Jong, University of Amsterdam, and Lans Bovenberg, University of Tilburg). Basic income came out as a bas fourth, but it had also been ranked first by two of the experts (Mickey Huybregtsen, former consultant for MacKinsey, and Claudia Zuiderwijk, a hospital director and the only woman in the panel).

SWITZERLAND: LEAFLET FOR THE ELECTIONS

Within the context of the campaign for Switzerland's federal elections (19 October 2003), the Swiss basic income network BIEN-CH, created on the occasion of BIEN's Geneva congress in September 2002, produced a bilingual leaflet presenting the case for basic income (*Ein garantiertes Grundeinkommen für alle/ Un revenu de base pour chacun*). It was sent to all candidates and to the press, and can be obtained from Bridget DOMMEN, 100 ch. des Mollies, 1293 Bellevue, bdommen@mail-box.ch.

5. RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

Block, Fred & Somers, Margaret. "In the shadow of Speenhamland. Social policy and the old poor law", *Politics and Society* 31 (2), June 2003, 283-323. (Authors' addresses: flblock@ucdavis.edu, peggs@umich.edu.)
No ancient episode played a more important role in contemporary debates on social policy than the introduction and abolition of the so-called Speenhamland system in late 18th century England, as analysed by Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation*. Reference to this episode is generally used as a deadly argument against guaranteed income schemes. In this article, Fred Block (University of California, Davis) and Margaret Somers (University of Michigan, AnnArbor) argue that the real lessons to be drawn from the episode are quite different: "Welfare and income maintenance policies need to be debated free of the mythologies that were created two hundred years ago... it is time to reject the ideological claim that the best way to fight poverty is by imposing increasingly stringent conditions on ever shrinking transfer payments to poor households".

Brain, Marshall. "Robotic Freedom", 2003,
<http://marshallbrain.com/robotic-freedom.htm>. (Author's address:
marshall@marshallbrain.com.)

"What if we gave every citizen of the United States \$25,000 to spend? \$25,000 sounds impossible the first time you hear it, but consider the possibility...The economy would be strong because of all of the consumer spending. The economy would be stable because income (and therefore spending) would be guaranteed. With \$25,000 per year to spend, innovators would no longer be forced to work... Inventors would have time to invent, writers to write, entrepreneurs to breed new companies, etc... Most importantly, it would create a nation where the citizens are truly free. If every person had \$25,000 per year in today's dollars to spend, they would be able to live their lives even if they lost their jobs. If robots took their jobs it would not be catastrophic. People would be able to weather the robotic takeover, retrain and move into new careers." In this provocative essay (part of a series called "Robotic Nation", Marshall Brain, best-selling author of *How Stuff Works* and *The Teenager's Guide to the Real World*, argues for a universal basic income for all US citizens. How would it be funded? Marshall Brain makes ten suggestions. They include familiar ones such as an Alaska-type oil fund, but also advertising on one side of all dollar bills (which should raise annually \$25 per capita, he reckons) and the shortening of the private copyright period, with public appropriation of all revenue generated beyond that period.

Sala-i-Martin, Xavier & Subramanian, Arvind. "Addressing the Natural Resource Curse: An illustration from Nigeria", NBER Working Paper w9804, June 2003 (<http://www.nber.org/papers/w9804>).

According to this technical paper by Spanish economist and Columbia University Professor Sala-i-Martin (also the author of one of the most authoritative estimates of recent trends in worldwide income inequality) and IMF staff member Subramanian, the oil-rich Nigeria would be better off if it distributed its mineral wealth directly to the people as an unconditional dividend, rather than continue with a system which has seen poverty double in the last 20 years. As a result of such distribution, the country's economy could be rejuvenated and debt relief would be possible as opportunities for corruption were reduced."Even with all the difficulties that will no doubt plague its actual implementation, our proposal will, at least, be vastly superior to the status quo." (For an informal summary, see David Chances report for Reuter: <http://www.earthrights.net/nigeria/news/oilmoney-imf.html>)

FRENCH

Clerc, Denis. "L'idée d'un revenu d'existence: une idée séduisante... et dangereuse", in *Comprendre les inégalités* (Fitoussi, Jean-Paul & Savidan, Patrick eds.), special issue of *Comprendre*. *Revue de philosophie et de sciences sociales* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France,

revues@puf.com) 4, 2003, 201-08. (Author's address: Denis.Clerc@wanadoo.fr)

Left-wing economist Deni Clerc, driving force beyond the highly successful magazine *Alternatives économiques*, is not convinced by Philippe Van Parijs's plea for basic income in this substantial volume on inequalities edited by economist Jean-Paul Fitoussi (Sciences Po, Paris) and philosopher Patrick Savidan (Paris-Sorbonne). The idea of a universal basic income is seductive but dangerous. Its anarcho-liberal version (Van Parijs) is dangerous because it overlooks the social dimension. Its critical version (Gorz) is dangerous because it overlooks the economic dimension.

Ferry, Jean-Marc. "Tout le monde est vulnérable", *Le Soir* (Brussels), 25 November 2003, p.17.

A full-page interview in Belgium's main French-language daily paper, with French philosopher Jean-Marc Ferry, professor at the Free University of Brussels and brother of France's Education Minister Luc Ferry. Consistently with his earlier writings (*L'Allocation universelle*, 1995, and *La Question de l'Etat européen*, 2001), he argues for the introduction of an unconditional basic income at European level. People should not be marginalized because they exercise an activity which is not considered socially useful. By strengthening the conditionality of social assistance, present-day governments increase vulnerability and turn our welfare state into an Americanized workfare state.

Van Parijs, Philippe. "L'allocation universelle: une idée simple et forte pour le XXIe siècle", in *Comprendre les inégalités* (Fitoussi, Jean-Paul & Savidan, Patrick eds.), special issue of *Comprendre. Revue de philosophie et de sciences sociales* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, revues@puf.com) 4, 2003, 155-200. (Author's address: vanparijs@etes.ucl.ac.be)

An extensive introduction to basic income, its variants and the debate around them, including a number of explanatory graphs that can be used for didactic purposes, e.g. to explain the familiar paradoxes that it is better for the poor that one should also give to the rich and that the rich should be taxed at a lower rate than the poor. This is an updated French version of the background paper for BIEN's Berlin Conference (October 2000), to be published soon in *Politics & Society* and subsequently in *Redesigning Distribution* (E.O. Wright ed., London & New York: Verso).

ITALIAN

Busilacchi Gianluca. "Redditi di base e misure selettive di attivazione: antitesi o convivenza?", in *L'Assistenza sociale. Rivista trimestrale sulle prospettive del welfare* 3-4, luglio-dicembre 2002, 92-136. (Author's address: "Gianluca Busilacchi" <busilacchi@posta.econ.unian.it>)
Whether at the local or at the global level, the fight against poverty is meant to be a priority, and a guaranteed minimum income a privileged tool. But a lot of confusion surrounds the very notion of a guaranteed

minimum income in European debates. The article attempts to clarify this notion, and defends one version of it, the universal basic income, which can be defended on grounds of providing freedom to every individual and which can be shown to be politically feasible.

Handler, Joel. "Cittadinanza sociale e workfare negli Stati Uniti e in Europa occidentale: dallo status al contratto?", in *L'Assistenza sociale. Rivista trimestrale sulle prospettive del welfare* 3-4, luglio-dicembre 2002, 55-92. (Author's address: "Handler, Joel" <Handler@law.ucla.edu>.)

A critical survey of workfare policies in the US and the EU. The lesson is unambiguous: "A basic income guarantee is necessary not only to relieve suffering but also to provide an exit option for the client."

6. ABOUT BIEN

BIEN's Executive Committee

Ilona Ostner (iostner@gwdg.de), co-chair

Guy Standing (guystanding@compuserve.com), co-chair

Alexander de Roo MEP (aderoo@europarl.eu.int), treasurer

Claus Offe (coffe@sowi.hu-berlin.de), research coordinator

Philippe Van Parijs (vanparijs@etes.ucl.ac.be), secretary, with support

from Yannick Vanderborght (vanderborght@etes.ucl.ac.be)

Jurgen De Wispelaere (j.de-wispelaere@lse.ac.uk), BIENOnline web manager

Ingrid Van Niekerk (ivanniekerk@epri.org.za), overseas officer

David Casassas (casassas@eco.ub.es), 2004 conference organiser

Honorary Committee Members

Edwin Morley-Fletcher (m-fletcher@cnel.it)

Robert J. van der Veen (vanderveen@warwick.ac.uk)

Walter Van Trier (Walter.VanTrier@hiva.kuleuven.ac.be)

Steven Quilley (steve.quilley@ucd.ie)

Recognised National Networks

IRELAND - BIEN Ireland

Coordinator: John Baker

Equality Studies Centre

University College Dublin

Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

Tel.: +353-1-716 8365

Fax: +353-1-716 1171

E-mail: John.Baker@ucd.ie

NETHERLANDS - Vereniging Basinkomen

Coordinator: Grietje Lof
Wagenaarstraat 184
1093 EB Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Tel.: +31-020-6852712
E-mail: info@basisinkomen.nl
Website : www.basisinkomen.nl

SWITZERLAND - BIEN Switzerland
President: Andras November
E-mail: andras.november@iued.unige.ch
Website: www.makessense.ch/basicincome/

SPAIN - Red Renta Basica
President: Daniel Raventos
Universitat de Barcelona
Departament de Teoria Sociologica
Avda. Diagonal 690, 08034 Barcelona, Spain
Tel.: +34.93.402.90.59
Fax: +34.93.322.65.54
E-mail: presidencia@redrentabasica.org
Website: www.redrentabasica.org

UK - Citizen's Income Study Centre
Director: Malcolm Torry
Citizens Income Trust, P.O. Box 26586,
London SE3 7WY, United Kingdom.
Tel.: 44-20-8305 1222
Fax: 44-20-8305 9944
E-mail: info@citizensincome.org
Website: www.citizensincome.org

BIEN'S LIFE MEMBERS

Link to <http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/BIEN/Join.htm> to find out how to become a Life Member of BIEN. Essentially, it amounts to send EUR 100 to BIEN's account 001 2204356 10 at FORTIS BANK (IBAN: BE41 0012 2043 5610), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussel, Belgium

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